

In the Claims

1. (Previously presented) A method of correlating a purchaser of a redeemable electronically-purchased item ("EPI") with the EPI, comprising:

a purchasing step, wherein purchaser-related financial and digital certificate information is transferred to a seller of said EPI and verification-related digital certificate information is transferred to said purchaser; and

a verification step, wherein said purchaser and said EPI are correlated by requiring said purchaser to provide said verification-related digital certificate information before redeeming said EPI and by electronically comparing said verification-related digital certificate information with said EPI.

2. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said purchasing step includes at least the steps of:

creating an electronically-readable indicia containing electronically-readable information corresponding to said verification-related digital certificate information; and  
associating said electronically-readable indicia with said EPI.

3. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein said verification step comprises:

electronically reading said electronically-readable ~~verification-related digital certificate~~ information from said electronically-readable indicia into a verification system prior to redeeming said EPI; and

comparing said read electronically-readable ~~verification-related digital certificate~~ information with verification-related digital certificate information provided by a person attempting to redeem the EPI.

4. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in claim 3, wherein said person attempting to redeem the EPI is authorized to do so only after the EPI is confirmed to have associated therewith verification-related digital certificate information corresponding to the verification-related digital certificate information provided by said redeeming party.

5. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said verification-related digital certificate information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining to said purchaser.

6. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said verification-related digital certificate information comprises a data file containing encrypted data pertaining to said EPI.

7. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said digital certificate information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining to said purchaser and data pertaining to said EPI.

8. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said purchaser-related digital certificate information is provided by data stored on a smart card.

9. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said purchaser-related digital certificate information is supplied from data stored on a PDA.

10. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said purchaser-related information is supplied from data stored on a cellular telephone.

11. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein said electronically-readable indicia comprises bar coding.

12. (Withdrawn) A method of correlating a purchased item to be picked up by a purchaser with the purchaser of the item, comprising the steps of:

transferring indicia of verification-related digital certificate information to the purchased item;

requiring said purchaser to present said verification-related digital certificate information upon picking up said item; and

correlating said purchased item with the purchaser of the item by electronically comparing said verification-related digital certificate information presented by said purchaser with said indicia.

13. (Previously presented) A method of correlating a purchased redeemable ticket (PRD) with the purchaser of the redeemable ticket, comprising:

a purchasing step, wherein purchaser-related financial and digital certificate information is transferred to a seller of said PRD and verification-related digital certificate information is transferred to said purchaser; and

a verification step, wherein said purchaser and said PRD are correlated by requiring said purchaser to provide said verification-related digital certificate information before redeeming said PRD and by electronically comparing said verification-related digital certificate information with said PRD.

14. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in claim 13, wherein said purchasing step includes at least the steps of:

creating an electronically-readable indicia containing electronically-readable information corresponding to said verification-related digital certificate information; and associating said electronically-readable indicia with said PRD.

15. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in claim 14, wherein said verification step comprises:

electronically reading said electronically-readable ~~verification-related digital certificate~~ information from said electronically-readable indicia into a verification system prior to redeeming said PRD; and

comparing said read electronically-readable ~~verification-related digital certificate~~ information with verification-related digital certificate information provided by a person attempting to redeem the PRD.

16. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein the PRD is authorized to be redeemed said person attempting to redeem the PRD only after the PRD is confirmed to have associated therewith verification-related digital certificate information corresponding to the verification-related digital certificate information provided by said receiving party.

17. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said verification-related digital certificate information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining to said purchaser.

18. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said verification-related digital certificate information comprises a data file containing encrypted data pertaining to said PRD.

19. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said digital certificate information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining to said purchaser and data pertaining to said PRD.

20. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said purchaser-related digital certificate information is provided by data stored on a smart card.

21. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said purchaser-related digital certificate information is supplied from data stored on a PDA.

22. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said purchaser-related information is supplied from data stored on a cellular telephone.

23. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in claim ~~13~~14, wherein said electronically-readable indicia comprises bar coding.